United Nations ST/AI/2010/9

Secretariat

16 July 2010

Administrative instruction

Rest and recuperation

The Under-Secretary-General for Management, pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4 and for the purpose of implementing section II, paragraph 30, of General Assembly resolution 63/250, promulgates the following:

Section 1
General provisions

Purpose and definitions

1.1 Staff members required to work for extended periods at duty stations under hazardous, stressful and difficult conditions shall be granted regular periods of rest and recuperation under the terms of the present instruction, in order to protect their health and well-being, and to ensure optimal work performance upon the resumption of their duties, while preserving the operational readiness of the Organization. The rest and recuperation scheme is designed for exceptional and extraordinary circumstances, and is not to be considered an element of compensation for the hardship level or security rating of a duty station. Rest and recuperation is a means by which staff members can take regular authorized time off to leave the designated duty station in order to be given a break from the dangerous, stressful, isolated working and living conditions under which they serve. The rest and recuperation scheme should not be considered an additional annual leave entitlement, a family reunification mechanism, or financial compensation.

1.2 (a) For the purposes of the present instruction, the United Nations peacekeeping and political missions (hereinafter referred to as missions) and other duty stations for which the entitlement to rest and recuperation has been approved are referred to as rest and recuperation designated duty stations;

(b) Rest and recuperation away from the rest and recuperation designated duty station means going to a duty station not so designated;

(c) An assignment is a staff movement to a department, office or mission, with or without a change in duty station, for a limited period of time, during which the releasing department or office remains responsible for reabsorbing the staff member.

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1.3 Rest and recuperation comprises seven working days, including two travel days, charged to special leave with full pay granted to eligible staff members under staff rule 5.3. To ensure that the purpose set out in section 1.1 above is achieved, rest and recuperation is granted automatically once the conditions set out in section 3 below have been met, in order to give staff time off at regular intervals for rest and recuperation away from the rest and recuperation designated duty station.

Eligibility

1.4 All staff members who have been internationally recruited as determined by the Staff Rules and staff members on assignment who have obtained international status by virtue of their assignment shall be eligible for rest and recuperation, provided they serve at duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes in accordance with section 2 below.

Section 2
Designation of duty stations for rest and recuperation purposes

2.1 Duty stations shall be designated for rest and recuperation purposes by the Office of Human Resources Management after consultation with the substantive department or departments represented at the duty station, the Department of Safety and Security, the staff representatives for internationally recruited personnel in the field and the field group of the Human Resources Network of the United Nations System Chiefs Executive Board for Coordination (CEB).

2.2 In the designation of a duty station for rest and recuperation purposes, the presence of extraordinary conditions that have an impact on the health, safety and well-being of staff members, including hardship, isolation, security considerations and hazardous conditions, all of which will normally be reflected in the hardship classification of duty stations undertaken by the International Civil Service Commission, shall be taken into account.

2.3 Such designation shall normally be made for a one-year period, and shall be subject to midyear and annual reviews. However, significant changes in the duty station environment may result in a determination in the course of the year that the duty station should, or should no longer, be designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

2.4 Staff members shall be informed[1] of the list of duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes, and of the effective date of that designation.

Effect of change in designation

2.5 Eligible staff members already present at a duty station newly designated for rest and recuperation purposes shall begin to accrue qualifying service as from the effective date of the designation.

2.6 Should a duty station cease to be designated for rest and recuperation purposes, staff members having served the applicable period of qualifying service as at the effective date of the cessation may take rest and recuperation within the

[1] The list of duty stations designated for rest and recuperation purposes is published in an information circular, on the United Nations intranet and on the website of the Office of Human Resources Management: http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances.

following month, as provided in section 3.12 below. There shall be no prorating of rest and recuperation for any period shorter than the defined rest and recuperation period served before the effective date of the cessation.

Section 3
Rest and recuperation conditions

Frequency

3.1 (a) In order to achieve the purpose defined in section 1.1 above, rest and recuperation shall be granted after a period of qualifying service, which shall be 12 weeks unless otherwise decided in accordance with section 3.1 (b) below;

(b) Should particularly severe hardship conditions prevail at specific duty stations, the duration of the period of qualifying service may be reduced by the Office of Human Resources Management after consultation with the relevant department, the Department of Safety and Security, the staff representatives for internationally recruited personnel serving in the field and the field group of the Human Resources Network of CEB.

3.2 Rest and recuperation shall not be granted during the last month of service at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, subject to section 3.11 (c) below.

Qualifying service

3.3 In order to be considered as "qualifying" for rest and recuperation purposes, service at a rest and recuperation designated duty station must be uninterrupted. Qualifying service shall be interrupted by any of the following:

(a) Travel on official business outside the rest and recuperation designated duty station, including travel for training purposes, if the staff member takes additional annual or special leave in conjunction with official travel outside the rest and recuperation designated duty station;

(b) Absence from the duty station on family leave, family visit travel, home leave or sick leave, special leave or annual leave for more than three consecutive working days.

3.4 When qualifying service has been interrupted, such service accrued before the interruption shall be forfeited and a new period shall begin upon the return to duty by the staff member at the duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

3.5 Qualifying service shall not be considered interrupted when a staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break from one rest and recuperation designated duty station to another. In such a case, qualifying service accrued at the first such duty station may be carried forward for the purpose of calculating qualifying service and used at the second such duty station.

3.6 The period of qualifying service shall run from the date of arrival of the staff member at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an interruption of qualifying service, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an absence on rest and recuperation.

Duration of rest and recuperation absence from the designated duty station, and combination with other types of authorized absence

3.7 Rest and recuperation is granted for seven working days, including five working days for rest and recuperation, one working day for travel on the outward journey and one working day for travel on the return journey. In cases in which staff members serve in remote locations requiring considerable travel to the closest airport in order to depart for rest and recuperation, the administration may authorize additional working day(s) for the actual day(s) travelled within the rest and recuperation designated duty station on the outward and/or return journey. Where additional travel days for local travel within the rest and recuperation designated duty station are granted, the administration shall record, and report to the responsible department or office at Headquarters on, the reasons for the granting of additional travel days to the staff member concerned.

3.8 Only at the staff member's express request can rest and recuperation be taken for fewer than the normal seven working days.

3.9 Subject to exigencies of service, rest and recuperation may be taken in conjunction with the following:

(a) Official holidays;

(b) Annual leave, except when such leave is taken for home leave or family visit travel as provided in section 3.11 (a) below. Where rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, any illness occurring during the period of annual leave shall be subject to the provisions of staff rule 6.2 (e);

(c) Sick leave, subject to appropriate medical certification;

(d) Travel on official business, subject to the relevant staff rules.

When staff members are permitted to combine rest and recuperation with travel on official business for their personal convenience, any additional costs above the normal entitlement in respect of the official business travel shall be borne by the staff member. The Organization shall not be responsible for any additional expenses or liabilities that may be incurred as a result of combining rest and recuperation with travel on official business, including any costs incurred in connection with delays, ticket changes, cancellations or fare increases.

3.10 The maximum absence from the rest and recuperation designated duty station for each rest and recuperation period shall not exceed 12 calendar days, including weekends and official holidays, unless rest and recuperation is combined with annual leave, sick leave or travel on official business as provided in section 3.9 above. However, additional working days for local travel within the rest and recuperation designated duty station authorized under section 3.7 above shall not be taken into account in determining the maximum number of days of absence allowed for rest and recuperation.

3.11 Rest and recuperation may not be combined with any of the following:

(a) Travel on home leave, family visit or return travel in relation to an education grant. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave;

(b) Maternity leave, paternity leave or uncertified sick leave. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of rest and recuperation, all days previously authorized as rest and recuperation shall be charged to annual leave or other leave, as appropriate;

(c) Travel on departure from the rest and recuperation designated duty station at the end of the staff member's appointment or assignment, unless the staff member is transferred or reassigned without a break to another duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes under section 2 above. In that case, the staff member may take rest and recuperation for a period not exceeding seven working days, including two travel days, with a maximum period of absence of 12 calendar days, as provided in section 3.10 above. A longer period of absence shall result in the charging to annual leave of all days previously authorized for rest and recuperation purposes.

Timing of rest and recuperation

3.12 In order to achieve its purpose, rest and recuperation must be taken within one month following the completion of the period of qualifying service and shall be forfeited if the staff member elects not to take it within the prescribed period. Should exigencies of service, as determined by the head of administration or mission support at the rest and recuperation designated duty station, make it impossible for a staff member to take rest and recuperation within that period, it may be taken during the following month on an exceptional basis, after which the entitlement to rest and recuperation for the particular qualifying period shall no longer exist.

3.13 Rest and recuperation may not be carried forward from one qualifying period to the next or combined with subsequent rest and recuperation.

3.14 In view of the strict constraints on the times during which rest and recuperation may be taken, each rest and recuperation designated duty station is required to plan the allocation of its human resources accordingly. In particular, each such duty station shall make the arrangements necessary to ensure that:

(a) Staff members are able to avail themselves, at the appropriate intervals, of their rest and recuperation and annual leave entitlements;

(b) The office is appropriately covered within existing resources during the period of the staff member's absence on rest and recuperation.

Location of rest and recuperation

3.15 Rest and recuperation shall be taken outside the duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

Relationship of rest and recuperation with other entitlements

3.16 Staff members shall have full-pay status while on rest and recuperation. Entitlement to mission subsistence allowance, where applicable, for the period shall be subject to the provisions of ST/AI/1997/6 and Amend.1. Regardless of whether transport is provided by the United Nations, daily subsistence allowance is not applicable while the staff member is on rest and recuperation.

3.17 Rest and recuperation does not affect the periodicity or accrual of any other travel or leave entitlement. However, travel on home leave or family visit travel shall not be authorized until at least one month after a return from rest and recuperation.

3.18 Costs incurred when travelling on rest and recuperation shall be the exclusive responsibility of the staff member. However, in those areas where the United Nations has means of transport arranged for official purposes, every effort shall be made to facilitate the use of such transport by staff members leaving or returning to the rest and recuperation designated duty station, at no cost or minimal cost, on a "non-interference, space available basis".[2] As provided in paragraph 3.9 (d) above, rest and recuperation may be combined with travel on official business.

3.19 No overtime or compensatory time off shall be granted for internationally recruited staff at rest and recuperation designated duty stations.

Section 4
Final provisions

4.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

4.2 Administrative instructions ST/AI/2000/21 and ST/AI/2004/6 and Corr.1 are hereby abolished.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management

[2] "Non-interference, space available basis" means that staff travelling on rest and recuperation may use United Nations aircraft provided their travel does not interfere with the operational priorities for passengers as established by the Secretary-General, and provided there is space available to accommodate the individual.

United Nations ST/AI/2010/10

Secretariat

25 August 2010

Administrative instruction

Upgrading of substantive and technical skills

Pursuant to section 4.2 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2009/4, the Under-Secretary-General for Management promulgates the following procedures to implement the programme for upgrading the substantive and technical skills of staff members.

Section 1
Objectives and contents of the programme

1.1 The purpose of the programme for upgrading substantive and technical skills is to provide departments and offices throughout the Secretariat with a means to ensure that they can carry out their substantive work and adjust to new mandates and responsibilities by maintaining and developing the skills of their staff within the allocated resources. The programme provides staff with opportunities for professional growth and development and, as stipulated in section 2.1 of ST/SGB/2009/9, learning and development is a responsibility shared by the Organization, its managers and each individual staff member.

1.2 Staff development activities that may take place under this programme include specialized training, research, seminars, refresher courses, e-learning, professional conferences, workshops and any other activities mentioned in section 2.6 of ST/SGB/2009/9. Where the skills and knowledge required can best be acquired through hands-on experience, on-the-job training assignments may also be included. Activities may be carried out in-house or externally, under the conditions set out in section 3 below. While the Organization does not fund degree programmes, support for a course which is part of a degree programme may be offered from this allocation at the discretion of the head of department or office, provided that all other conditions have been met.

Section 2
Delegation of authority

2.1 Responsibility for managing the resources allocated to each department or office under the provisions of the present instruction is hereby delegated to the heads of departments and offices concerned.

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Section 3
Annual training plans

Preparation

3.1 Each department or office shall determine its training needs and set priorities for achieving its strategic goals and developing its human resources. Individual training requirements shall be identified during work-planning and performance management discussions in the context of the performance appraisal system or in individual discussions of training requirements with supervisors, which staff members are encouraged to initiate. On that basis, the department or office shall prepare an annual training plan that aims to provide training opportunities for all categories of staff and to achieve a gender balance. When developing the plan, departments and offices may wish to consider other appropriate opportunities for external study offered by the Organization (e.g. sabbatical leave). Departments and offices may wish to consult the Learning, Leadership and Organizational Development Section of the Office of Human Resources Management or the training service at duty stations away from Headquarters on the formulation of the plan. The plan shall be prepared in consultation with staff as provided for by Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/274.

Submission, review and approval

3.2 Departments and offices shall submit their annual training plans at the end of each calendar year to the Learning, Leadership and Organizational Development Section for review and approval. All plans shall be reviewed to determine whether they are consistent with the objectives and contents of the programme set out in section 1 above, and with the guidelines for preparing the plans specified in subsection 3.1 above. When the various plans reveal common needs, centrally coordinated training programmes may be proposed for the consideration of the Office of Human Resources Management to maximize use of resources. Centrally coordinated programmes are offered in the areas of leadership, resource management and administration, career support, information technology and language and communications skills. These include the e-learning opportunities offered through the eLearning Portal of the Secretariat. Proposals for external training shall be approved in cases where no equivalent training is available within the Secretariat or other agencies of the United Nations common system of salaries, allowances and benefits to which Secretariat staff have access, or where it would not be cost-effective to organize in-house training.

Section 4
Funding and administration of the annual training plan

4.1 After review and approval of the training plans, the Learning, Leadership and Organizational Development Section shall allocate funds to each department and office at the beginning of each calendar year. The criteria applied in allocating resources include, but are not limited to, an equitable distribution of available resources among all departments and offices, their effectiveness in carrying out the previous year's plan, the Organization's strategic priorities for the coming year and the number of regular budget posts in the department or office. Allocated funds may be used for payment of consultants to deliver in-house training courses to increase cost-effectiveness, and for tuition fees, travel expenses, per diem or academic

stipends, as applicable, in the case of individual external training. Effort should be made to reduce travel expenses to a minimum by combining travel with other official business.

4.2 Each department or office shall be responsible for the execution of its training plan. It shall inform its staff of the approved plan and shall be responsible for the administration of the use of the funds allocated, including the approval of individual training requests, which shall be considered in accordance with section 6 below.

4.3 Offices and departments may need to identify extrabudgetary resources to supplement the allocation, as necessary. Provision for training of peacekeeping operations staff is made under each mission's assessed budget.

4.4 If necessary, the department or office may adjust the plan as originally approved, provided the adjustments are within the limits of allocated funds and are described in the required quarterly report, as provided for in section 5 below.

Section 5
Monitoring and evaluation of the execution of the annual training plan

5.1 The Learning, Leadership and Organizational Development Section shall monitor the manner in which each annual training plan is executed. For that purpose, each department or office shall submit, at the end of each quarter, an expenditure report on the use of the allocated funds and an updated training plan describing the training undertaken by its staff during the year, together with an assessment of the impact of the training on the work of the department or office and of the individuals involved. The two reports may be consolidated into one presented in a template to be provided by the Office of Human Resources Management.

5.2 The reports shall be reviewed and evaluated by the Learning, Leadership and Organizational Development Section. Effectiveness in carrying out the approved annual training plan and making optimal use of the allocated funds shall be a major factor in determining the allocation of funds for this programme in subsequent years.

Section 6
Conditions for participation of staff members in the programme

Eligibility

6.1 Staff members at all levels holding a United Nations letter of appointment under the Staff Rules are eligible to participate in the programme. To be granted financial assistance for external training, notwithstanding staff rules 4.12 (c) and 4.13 (c), there should be an expectation of continued service for at least one year in the Secretariat after completion of the proposed training activity.

Individual requests for training

6.2 Individual requests for training shall be submitted, through the immediate supervisor, to the relevant department or office responsible for approval of such requests. Requests consistent with the annual training plan may be approved within the limits of available resources. In the case of requests both for individuals to pursue training outside the Organization and for groups of staff to be trained in-house under

this programme, the department or office shall take into account the following factors in deciding whether the request should be approved:

(a) The relationship of the studies to the functions of the staff member and/or organizational needs;

(b) The suitability of the staff member for the proposed studies;

(c) The quality of the programme and the sponsoring institution;

(d) The expected impact of the proposed training on the staff member's professional development and the work of the office or department;

(e) The possibility that the training will have a multiplier effect (that is, for the beneficiary of the training to impart the knowledge gained to other staff members).

Leave arrangements

6.3 Staff members participating in training activities outside their office may be placed on special leave with or without pay, in accordance with staff rule 5.3 (a) (i). They may also use accrued annual leave for all or part of the period of study. The head of department at Headquarters or the chief of administration at offices away from Headquarters may approve special leave with pay for the purposes of the programme for a period of up to 20 working days or a longer period, in accordance with the applicable delegation of authority. Requests for special leave with pay in excess of the period that may be approved at the department or office level shall be submitted to the Learning, Development and Human Resources Services Division of the Office of Human Resources Management.

6.4 In accordance with ST/SGB/2003/4 on flexible working arrangements, staff members wishing to attend courses relevant to their professional development at universities or other learning institutions may request breaks of up to three hours per day for a maximum of two days per week. The hours spent away from work during a particular week must be made up during that week.

Section 7
Final provisions

7.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

7.2 Administrative instruction ST/AI/1997/4 on upgrading of substantive and technical skills is hereby superseded and abolished.

(*Signed*) Angela **Kane**
Under-Secretary-General for Management